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SUMMARY



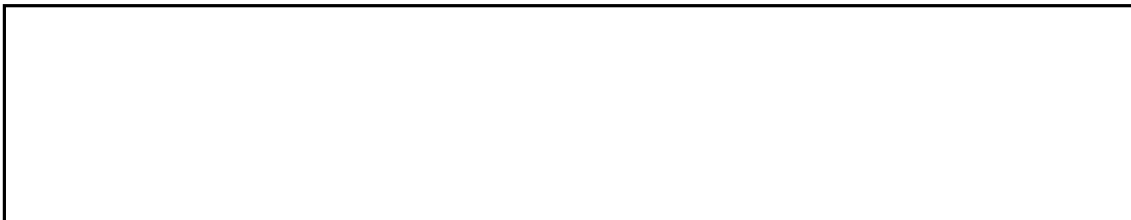
WESTERN EUROPE

3. French see USSR using trade to press for German neutralization (page 4).

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WESTERN EUROPE

3. French see USSR using trade to press for German neutralization:

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French officials in Moscow and Paris fear the USSR will switch trade and ship-construction contracts from France to West Germany as part of a policy designed to neutralize Germany.

The French economic counselor in Moscow recently discussed with Soviet trade officials the failure of the USSR to show an interest in concluding contracts for ten ships included in the 1954 French-Soviet trade agreement. He was told that the USSR was now interested only in ships capable of 17.5 knots and that "other Western countries" were willing to furnish vessels of this speed.

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Comment: The reported Soviet position may be a tactic similar to those used in the past when a COCOM country has refused to furnish embargoed items. COCOM restrictions on ship exports are still under review, and the USSR may hope to increase the dissension on this issue among COCOM members.

Some French officials are becoming increasingly skeptical about the possibility of expanding trade with the USSR and are expected to seek an explanation for the abrupt decline in Soviet orders since December 1954. At that time Paris had feared the decline was Soviet retaliation for the Paris agreements, but a general drop in Soviet imports from the West has since become apparent.

The USSR's own economic situation permits it to make only limited trade offers in Western Europe. It probably believes that it must now seek to achieve its foreign policy objectives more through West Germany than France. (Concurred in by ORR)

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